

be stored in their burrow or nest. During hibernation, chipmunks rely on this extra stored food rather than storing fat. Chipmunks are primarily solitary creatures and ignore each other until mating season in spring. Females give birth to litters of two to eight after a 30-day gestation period. The young remain with their parents for two months before they begin to collect their own food for the coming winter.

9. There is a wide array of birds that either live permanently in or reside in during the migration season at



St. Paul’s Church. Two types of birds known for their singing nest at St. Paul’s Church. The Chipping Sparrow is most associated with its high-pitched fast and slow trill song though its piercing flight call can be heard all year round. Northern Mockingbirds sing almost relentlessly and harass birds that intrude on their territories by flying around or prancing toward them with their legs extended showing off the bright white patches on their wings. There are two types of woodpeckers that also nest in the trees in St. Paul’s Church; Northern Flickers dig for ants and beetles in the ground with their curved beaks and Red-bellied Woodpeckers whose

name is a misnomer as the most prominent element of their plumage is a red crown and red markings around their bills. Chimney Swifts, who are unable to perch remain primarily airborne. They cling to chimneys or in hollow trees and are commonly found in the early evening roosting in the bell tower. Although they are found primarily along warm coasts, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron can be spotted flying overhead at dusk. They are a nocturnal species whose name refers to the yellow plume of feathers that both male and female birds have during breeding season. The European Starling, often resented for their number and their aggressiveness, is likely the most successfully introduced bird and evicts native species from nest holes. The Starling was introduced in Central Park, NY,



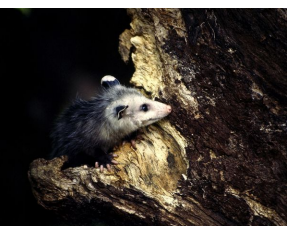
from 1890-1891 by Shakespeare enthusiasts and has a current population exceeding 200 million. American Robins and European House Sparrow also populate the surrounding area. You might be surprised to see Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, American Redstarts, White-throated Sparrows, and Hermit Thrush during the migration season (typically in May) when birds return home from Canada or Georgia and pass through the area.



Wildlife at St. Paul’s Church, National Historic Site

While the animals that find St. Paul’s Church home are vastly different from each other, there are some commonalities among them that allow them to live in a fairly urban environment. For one, each species easily adapts to their environment through eating a variety of foods. Many species accommodate the cold, snowy winters of New York by hibernating and tend to have a high fecundity in order to maintain their population size and compensate for their status in food chain as prey to many predators. Although the St. Paul’s Church ecosystem is certainly not unique to the area, the six-acre cemetery provides a habitat for many typical “backyard animals,” as well as some more surprising ones. While the area had far more open land and wooded areas when the Church was founded, early residents of the area could have seen the same species that can be found today at St. Paul’s Church.

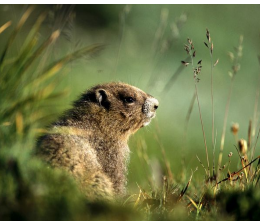
1. Opossum, otherwise known as possum, are the only marsupial found in the United States and Canada.



As the surrounding area is heavily industrial, you might be surprised to find possum at St. Paul’s Church. Females give birth to young the size of honeybees, which then crawl into the mother’s pouch as they mature. Once they are bigger, they may ride on the mother’s back as she looks for food. Litters are typically 20 offspring, though less than half-survive. Opossums are omnivores and scavengers that eat carrion, grass, nuts, and fruits.

During times of low food availability, they will hunt mice, birds, insects, worms, snakes, and chickens. When prey such as dogs, foxes, and bobcats threatens opossums, they lie with their eyes closed or stare blankly into space with their tongues extended pretending to be dead. This surprises the predators and provides the opossum with enough time to escape. As opossums have sharp claws, which allow them to grip bark and a long prehensile tail that can grab onto trees, they are adept at climbing trees and spend the majority of their time in trees rather than on the ground.

2. Groundhogs, also known as woodchucks, are the largest mammal in the squirrel family and are one of 14 species of marmots. Groundhogs alternate between feasting and fasting. During the summer they eat large amounts of food to build reserves of fat. Upon the first frost, they escape to underground burrows and hibernate until the spring, using the body fat as sustenance. This period of hibernation led to the American tradition of Groundhog Day, which occurs annually on the second February. Groundhogs are capable climbers and swimmers, though, unlike opossum, they spend most of their life on the ground. They typically reside on the border of woodlands near fields, roads, and streams. Groundhogs are herbivores and their diet mainly includes grasses, plants, fruits, and tree bark.



3. Because of their dexterous front paws and long fingers, raccoons scavenge for and eat a variety of foods. Raccoons are omnivores and nocturnal foragers: they use their fast paws to grab crayfish, frogs, and other aquatic organisms, pluck mice and insects, and raid nests for eggs. In the northern part of their range, raccoons eat large amounts of food in spring and summer to store up body fat and hibernate for most of the winter in their den. Raccoons can live in varied habitats including in forests, marshes, prairies, and cities and are opportunistic when looking for dens and may inhabit a fallen log, or a house's attic. There are seven species of raccoon, many of which live in the tropics, but the species seen around St. Paul's Church is the North American raccoon.



4. Eastern Cottontail Rabbits are found from Canada to the Southern United States to the Great Plains.



Rabbits are naturally found on all continents except Antarctica and Australia, although they were introduced in 1859 and have become quite prolific. Their coloration ranges from reddish brown to gray, but all have a distinctive fluffy white tail that resembles a cotton ball. They live on the edges of fields, meadows, and farms, but easily adapt to other habitats. During the night they eat grasses and herbs, as well as garden plants including lettuce and carrots. In the winter, they consume bark, twigs, and buds. During the day, they hide in vegetation, but upon being spotted, they flee in a zig-zag pattern, and can reach speed up to 18 mph. Eastern Cottontail rabbits breed three to four times every year and have three to eight young. The young are extremely helpless and only around 15% survive. They mature quickly becoming self-sufficient after four to five weeks and reaching sexual maturity after two to three months.

5. Skunks have a variety of black-and-white stripes, spots, and swirled patterns that serve as warning signals to alert predators of their spray. A skunk's spray is an oily liquid produced by glands beneath the tail and can be sprayed as far as ten feet. It causes no true harm to the predators, but does make them uncomfortable as it lingers for many days and is hard to remove. This is an effective defensive technique and as a result, predators rarely attack skunks unless there is little food available. They usually nest in burrows made by other animals, but can live in hollow logs and even in abandoned buildings. In cold climates, skunks may hibernate for several weeks. Each female gives birth to two to ten young every year, usually around May. They are opportunistic omnivores and nocturnal foragers who eat fruits, plants, insects, larvae, worms, eggs, reptiles, small mammals and fish.



6. There are more than 200 species of squirrels around the world, the smallest of which is the African pygmy squirrel. It is only five inches from nose to tail while the Indian giant squirrel is three feet long. Tree squirrels, such as those at St. Paul's Church, live in woodlands and city parks. Squirrels are rodents and have four front teeth that never stop growing. Although they are very good climbers, they typically come to the ground in search of food including nuts, acorns, berries, and flowers. They sometimes eat bark, eggs, baby birds, and tree sap. They have many predators as they have few natural defenses, though groups of ground squirrels work together using calls to warn each other of predators. Flying squirrels extend their arms and legs that have flaps of skin connecting the limbs to create a surface that mimics wings to glide from one tree to another. Female squirrels have litters of two to eight offspring. Babies are blind and completely dependent on their mothers for two to three months.



7. White-tailed deer might appear as unlikely inhabitants given the industrial nature of the area.



However, if a deer manages to get to St. Paul's Church, as they have in the past, the wide area of supple grass provides a more than sufficient area for them to live. During the summer white-tailed deer graze in meadows and during the winter they migrate to forests to shield themselves from the harsh weather. The reddish-brown coats of adults in summer fade to a dull grayish-brown in winter. Male deer, or bucks, have antlers that grow annually and fall off during the winter. Only bucks grow antlers, which they use in sparring matches to fight over territory. Deer are herbivores and their stomachs permit them to eat a wide range of plants ranging from leaves, twigs, fruit, nuts, grass, corn, alfalfa, lichens and other fungi. White-tailed deer are primarily nocturnal or crepuscular, meaning they are mainly active during twilight. Preyed upon by bobcats, mountain lions, and coyotes, their primary defense is their speed, which allows them to run 30 mph. Deer can also leap as high as 10 feet and as far as 30 feet in a single bound.

8. There are 25 different species of chipmunks and all but one, *Tamias sibiricus*, which lives in Asia, are found in North America. They scamper in undergrowth of a variety of habitats including alpine forests and shrubby deserts. Some dig elaborate burrows complete with tunnels and chambers to reside in, while others live in nests, bushes, and logs. The color of their fur ranges from gray to reddish brown with dark and light stripes across their back and tail. They collect food on the ground in areas with a high concentration of underbrush, rocks, and logs enabling them to hide from predators which includes hawks, foxes, coyotes, weasels, and snakes. Upon gathering insects, nuts, berries, seeds, fruit, and grain, chipmunks stuff the food into their pocket-like cheeks and carry it to

